

Accompanying letter relating to M. D. Conway's offer to Jas. M. Mason.
(Dublin, June 27. 1863)

Dear Mr May - I don't know whether you will consider
me needlessly officious in sending you all this packet of
correspondence. It begins with the note & copy of a letter to
Mr Taylor dated the 20th of this month, the day on which
Harriet Martineau saw & was amazed by the Conway & Mason
letter. Mr Taylor is the M.P. with whom Miss Remond is
staying as companion; and as the pair are anti-slavery, they
had Conway as their guest. It was probably in their house
he met Tennyson, Browning, &c. to whom Chapman in his letter &
Bryant in his note refers. On receipt of ~~the~~ Miss Maria Martineau
note & copy of her aunt's letter to Taylor, I addressed letters on the
subject to S. J. John Ruskin, & others; & I send you 3 of the replies.
Except H. M. & S. J. nobody seemed to me to see how serious
the matter was as affecting those by whom Conway was sent
to Europe. In the present dark condition of things in the North,
with the opposition to raising their heads as they do, I ~~wondered~~ ^{wondered} to any
extent that the abolitionists ^{may} ~~would~~ be put in a condition of
great danger. Within the last week a acquaintance of mine
who has lived many years in New York & has returned said he wd
not be surprised to hear that the people in these cities and dis-
contentment had begun to mob the abolitionists. I know that
New York is probably as bad a place as there is in the free states
and that a person long resident there might naturally take
up the idea that the whole country was as corrupt as New York.
- but I know that the opinion of this gentleman (who is a man
of no common intelligence) is that the northern magnates are more
ferocious to slavery & are more hostile to the blacks than they are to the
whites. The tone of the Washington correspondent of the Standard
is decidedly depressing & I have generally great confidence in
the statements he makes. The last Standard that came containing
many references to Conway's letter in which he gives a good im-
pression of the direction of anti-slavery zeal of the representatives
of the North in England. He has certainly not been wise himself.

One of the anti-slavery friends to whom I wrote respecting
this affair and whose answer I do not send as it is
merely on private affairs of my own concerns. The
"Committee of the Emancipation Society have adopted a
"letter condemning Comwells conduct. He is generally considered
"a remarkably independent & forthright person, & many are
"puzzled to understand why he should have been sent over.
"He is clear as a crystal, but he lacks other qualities necessary
"to make his mission a success."

My feeling of late is one of great discouragement about
American affairs. There is a want of heartiness about these
measures for the destruction of Slavery that is extremely de-
pressing. When Lewis returned. If there had been one
great man at the head of the Northern Councils things
could not be in the deplorable state of depression
which we now witness. The whole struggle has lessened
my hope in the progress of mankind. I thought the North
would be more easily compelled to take an anti-slavery
position. I do not at all think so much of the moral
weight of England would be thrown into the scale of the
most miserable superstition, cool that exists in a concrete
form on earth. But I maintain that the few who
stand up for the right side in England or in America
cannot be justly condemned for the inequality that they
protest against but have no power to prevent.

Our ~~pro-southern~~ pro-southern papers are full of
reports of Democratic meetings in favor of peace in the
Southern cities - and if these pass off uninterrupted by
popular hostility - I don't see that the Abolitionists should
be attached if they even did suggest the abolition of Slavery
as a condition of peace. I wonder when we shall see light
breaking from the cloud that now shadows us.

Waiting to hear from you ere long I am ever truly yours

Richard D Webb